



**INTERNATIONAL
FEDERATION OF
PEDESTRIANS**

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July, 30th 2009

Call for comments on Driver Training Systems

The Commission is calling for comments on the suggestions outlined above. In particular we would be grateful for your replies to the following questions:

1. Do you think that driver training systems should be harmonised in the EU? If so, what advantages would it have for traffic safety, and what problems do you expect?

A high standard of driver's education is crucial for road safety. Training systems should only be harmonised if the standard of the countries that have the least crashes is adopted for all. A harmonisation that is a destruction of the best practise is certainly the wrong thing to do. Countries that have a high standard of driver's education should not be obliged to recognise the driver's licences of immigrants from countries that have a poor standard.

2. Should traffic education at school be mandatory?

Children have to be educated about the correct behaviour while crossing a street or road. In places where bicycles are used, an instruction of traffic rules should be mandatory, and there should be a possibility to learn properly how to ride a bicycle safely. .

A general education should include an understanding how road traffic works. All pupils should learn about the physics of speed and crashes, but it should by no means be mandatory to learn how to drive a car. In fact, a person may be a fully educated human even without knowing how to drive. (Some people seem to forget that.) To believe that knowing how to drive is a necessary element of general education is wrong. Only in remote areas, where driving is necessary to participate in societal living, driver's education is a social necessity. In places where there is a decent offer of public transport knowing how to drive is not necessary.

3. Should driving instructors undergo continuing professional development?

Of course! Would you want to have surgery done by a medical doctor who has not learned anything new for the last 30 years? A permanent education program has to be at the base of professional driver's training.

4. Should coaching be emphasised more as a teaching method for driving instructors?

"Coaching" is not a precise term.

The most important attitude for drivers, riders and pedestrians is to carefully take notice of the action and intention of the other road users. If "coaching" means to induce somebody to have empathy for the other humans he or she meets in the street or on the road, then of course coaching should be highly emphasised.

5. Should post-test practical experience models be encouraged?

Yes, not only encouraged, but it should be a program. One test is not enough for a life-long license.

6. Should accompanied driving systems be encouraged?

Should they be harmonised at EU level?

It should be mandatory everywhere that anybody who is to be admitted to a test for a driver's license has passed a number of hours driving accompanied by a professional road safety instructor.

On harmonisation: See answer to question 1.

7. Should accompanied driving systems with 'lay instructors' be encouraged?

Should there be training requirements for lay instructors?

Lay instructors may accompany a learning driver before the test, but their teaching should be counted for a pre-test qualification of an applicant for a license only if these lay instructors themselves have had a qualifying training.

8. Do you agree that the minimum age of solo driving (with a category B licence) should be 18?

Yes, and it should be applied for light motorcycles as well. It would be a great mistake to lower that age limit. The number of crashes per number of drivers is significantly higher among young drivers.

9. Should more use be made of computer-based training systems? If so, in which areas?

The computer cannot transmit emotions such as empathy (see question 4.) which are very important for the education of a responsible driver. However, a computer may be very useful to simulate situations which happen, and may be very dangerous, if they have not been trained. For instance, the sudden appearance of a child or an elderly person at the roadside or on a sidewalk should induce a driver automatically to slow down or to stop. A person trying to cross at a zebra crossing should make a driver stop, no matter if the person comes from the right side or from the left side. Such reactions have to be trained, which is difficult to do in real traffic, because the game-ball that rolls on the carriageway is very rare, and the elderly person starting to cross exactly at the moment a car approaches is rare as well. A driver has to slow down while a bus is standing at a bus-stop since persons

are likely to appear behind the bus, and it is easily possible that somebody trying to catch the bus will run across the carriageway. Because such situations don't happen very often in real life, they have to be trained in simulation programs.

10. Should more use be made of e-learning? If so, in which areas?

E-learning is not better than analogous learning per se. But if the use of technology improves and deepens the learning process, it may be an excellent tool. e-learning can never replace the personal teaching completely, because e-learning does not teach emotional factors and responsibility.

Further comments on the Consultation Paper

In central urban situations, pedestrians and cyclists tend to become the majority of the road traffic victims, because there where speed control and passive safety devices become effective, only the particularly vulnerable road users remain as fatalities. A future driver's training has to take this into account.

It will always be impossible to ask for a test before a person is allowed to walk on public streets. However, the large majority of adult pedestrians have a driver's license in their pocket. Therefore, the right moment to look at the behaviour of pedestrians is in driving school while the young driver begins to realise what sort of behaviour by pedestrians is dangerous and why it is dangerous. At the same time, a driver should learn how to pay special attention to pedestrians at risk.


At the base of any psychological concept of road safety is the culture for the perception of the other road users.

The Swiss member of IFP is now beginning to produce a video which will be used as learning/teaching aid. The motion picture can teach things which are very difficult to explain with words. For instance the fact that there is not only a dead angle behind a driver which is dangerous among vehicles, but that there is a dead angle in front of the driver as well, which is in certain cases very dangerous for pedestrians approaching from the left side while vehicles are driving on the right side (or vice-versa).

In addition, this movie wants to teach to the young drivers that they are themselves pedestrians as soon as they have found a parking-space. The emotional gap between driving and walking should be bridged this way.

The president of IFP:
Ole Thorson, Spain

The Secretary of IFP:
Christian Thomas, Switzerland

	
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European Commission

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Road safety unit

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The deadline for the public consultation on driver training and traffic safety education

http://ec.europa.eu/transport/road_safety/consultations/2009_06_22_training_education_en.htm has been extended to 31 July 2009.